

5-7-1999

Senior Thesis Project

Jody McClean

Loyola Marymount University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/dance_theses



Part of the [Dance Commons](#), [Other Theatre and Performance Studies Commons](#), and the [Performance Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

McClean, Jody, "Senior Thesis Project" (1999). *Dance Undergraduate Theses*. 40.
http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/dance_theses/40

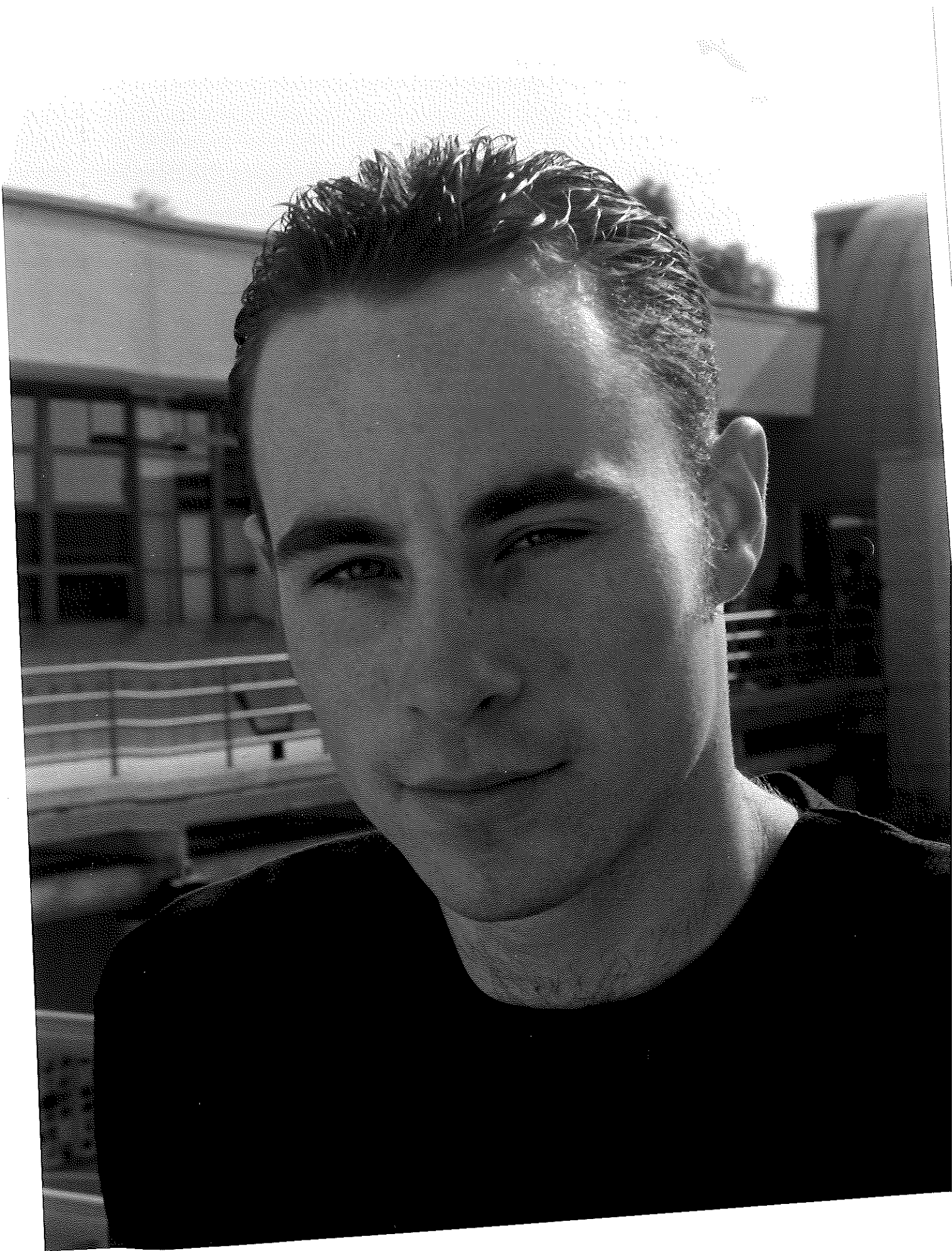
This Campus Access only theses is brought to you for free and open access by the Dance at Digital Commons @ Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dance Undergraduate Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@lmu.edu.

JODY McCLEAN

senior thesis project

may 7, 1999

Choreographic Workbook



“The First Dance”

The creation of this piece is an experience I will not soon forget. It was full of so many ups and downs and backs and forths that it's hard to recall now just exactly how things went. I kept a notebook of my ideas as I went along. I essentially created two different pieces because the first idea that I had nearly completed made no sense to me when it was almost choreographed. The original idea was to have a total of six girls split into three groups representing ballet, modern, and jazz styles of dance. I found music that was only text and when I began to work on the piece, it was an odd experience. I had never really experimented much with text, but liked the idea of not having to use counts and rhythms of music. As I honed in on my goal, I began to develop the idea that the piece would be about the differences between dance styles and end with everyone doing everyone else's style. The message was that no matter how different dance styles are from each other, it is all dance, in some form, and we are all dancers.

This first portion of my notebook contains my initial reactions to the music, combinations to teach the dancers, my thoughts on the purpose of the work, and a few other reminders. It spans from October 1998 to December 1998 and was a time of frustration for me. I realized that I was pursuing something that didn't make as much sense to me as I thought it would--even after I had essentially finished.

9/26/98

music selection is difficult!
I have too many ideas and
not enough concreteness to
go forward w/ anything!

Possibilities: African / Celtic
Gershwin / Joplin
Oldies - too jazzy?

9/27/98

~~9:55~~ 9:55

Storytelling

pure and raw

too many talking at once

interruption

coming together "Once upon..."

personal stories

repetition

laughing / comedy

happily ever after

who, when, what, why

noise

my story
true

short w/ scar
bloody

time
place

farming

deep forest
sea / boats

people talking

Possibilities:

- music over text in places
- = 5 people w/ individual attitudes

~~2 best friends~~

1 confident / ~~sassy~~ grand

1 shy

1 sexual / sassy

1 dramatic

parts to edit?

mother shot

places at end

intro → daughters
OUT

about boats, w/ sounds guitar

9/28/98

Audition

Katie

Molly

Sarah

Megan

Leah

Jenny

Ballet

Jenny

Megan

Modern

~~Leah~~ Leah

Molly

Jazz

Sarah

Yvette

+ Katie

Ballerinas

Katie

1/2 tutu

1 footless tight

bra top



My type of stereo

Statement/Purpose

The stryggue between the
3 styles of dance and
the realization that
they are all apart of
the same goal: moving and loving dance

mixing of stories

10/6/98

Possible

* All walk out and only have regard for their own style.

.....

→ K

!30-45 seconds

- Starts w/ K ^{silence} ~~text~~ (she knows something they don't!)

dancy mix of all styles

- Girls enter in a line to cover her up (Text starts)

- They look at each other in disgust to find their own partner

- Look up to booth, me?? me??

- Its ballet, the others leave pissed

- Ballet, modern, jazz + text throughout.

- ~~Text~~ text + recording rewind

- Plays again - styles gradually mix

10/7/98

Things to be careful of: !!!!

Too much separation!!

Complicated Ideas that don't
come across clearly.

Bring things back, in the end

Work on:

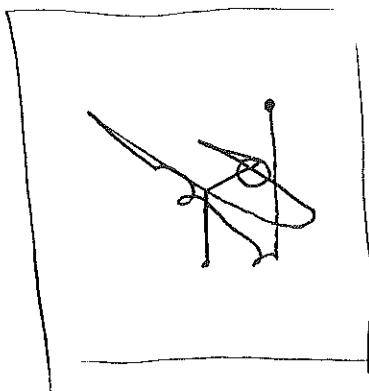
selecting text

music ~~se~~ w/ text and where
silence?

Molly out 10/18, 11/21

10/16/98

Variation: walk fwd
look down at feet
position str
look up, leans to low str
develop side carry back att
to front mod
to layout, drop
roll up w/ leg out
leg around
sexy down thigh
drop pas de chat (arms?)
lean (R) to fall to hip skate
left right left right (turning)
jete (no stay)
step turn ($\frac{1}{2}$ in $\frac{1}{2}$ out)
step on left w/ right popped
arm out
prance back
fan tilt to contraction
to swirl, hold stomach
swirl fast
walk fwd
plg / change



girls enter . . .



look @ each other

re-situate in line

look up to see who... it's ballet

others exit(?)

ballet to jazz to modern

Cont'd - greet the audience
walk around to up left corner
ballet, jazz, modern
prepare ballet

Big ^{both arms}
Step, glissade, poke-through
elbows back, left ^{leg} to passe

pas de chat turned in
to ~~the~~ 6th - focus back
fall - pdcouree - step left
bring arms up to high fifth
relevé, hold

Swing down, arms behind legs
~~jump down.~~

fall down

roll 3 times

Slowly arms/legs up
to fall down

arch to flat

roll to face left leg passe

left arm up through 5th

back arch up

switch to "A"

push up to standing, roll up

5th, facing back

tendue, press w/ weight,

walk off

REHEARSAL

10/18

NO REHEARSAL - 10/25!

- 1)
- X Katie
 - Yvette
 - X Jenny
 - Leah
 - X Megan
 - Sarah
 - Molly

Any more absences?

4 weeks
before
showing
mon 11/23 - pm

2) Explanation of Purpose

* personal experience: not having the ability to pick between styles

* separation between styles

* disconnected, but all involve the same thing... movement!

* transformation from separation to connectedness.

Music

part text, part music

✓
stories, all about different things, but they all are about the human experience.

✓
opera, Habanera
~~the~~

10/26/98

mtg. w/ Judy re: music, etc.

- music is good
- trunk on stage? w/ props
- things dropping from the sky. (✓)

10/27/98

Music Composition!

- Begins in Silence w/ Katie
- Text from start to "daughters' story" ^{favorite} "he was very young" 1:02
- "Habanera" ^{dog} 1:10 ~~1:12~~ → 1:12
- Text interrupts ^{crackling?? rewind??} 1:09 - 1:38 (sisters)
~~crackling~~ style stones
- "Habanera" 1:12 - 2:05
- Text interrupts ^{crackling} ^{rewind??} ~~2:03~~ 4:07 - 5:00
^{more persistent} ^{rewind??} ²⁻³ 3:09 ()
- "Habanera" 2:05 - ~~end~~: end
crackling, mac, they fight it hard
- Text finishes out w/ all doing phrase
- ends ~~the silence~~ at fade w/ ch. after end.

10/29/98

Mtg w/ Gary

* Sample tape w/ mix

* add crackling / stations switching

* add Habanera to end text as
it builds, w/ rewind? backwards
(before happily ever after

10/7/98

Ballet

passee (x2)

turn, arabesque through
side / side

up lean

Jazz

passee fall, turn to knee, down knee

jete second, step step pull (x2)

walk around to lean, + p.d.b second jete

~~turn~~ pir. turned in, hands overhead

roll to ground, fan kick

Kick back

to arch, slide through

to belly, back

arch up slowly

grab knees, 1, 2, 3,

face butt to arch

walk back 2 turn

lay out, step, step, reach turn

modern

swing down up, twist to front
over, around hwy over

Swing, pulse pulse around

to turn hwy over

throw (enclay) L R, contract

(G to side) L R, kneel contract

roll around ~~touch~~

! jump and out

touch touch water, wave over fall
back to push ... roll, lean into circ. ✓

11/1/98

REHEARSAL

Jenny out Yvette X
Meghan sick Sarah ~~X~~ out
Molly X Katie X
Leah ~~out~~

Announcements:

- * mentor Gary Bates on 11/15
- * next week - every body here!
extra 1/2 hr. 16:30
- * Costumes / staging possibilities
things dropping from the sky
trunk on stage

To Do: Ballet Section
Jazz
Modern

Group - ending

! jump, pulse (x3), up and around arms
arm w/ music
to center to circle

work on!

- 1) Co nvers on sections
- 2) end places / facings
- 3) clarify / complete bmj sects.
- 4) Bring the booth into it more
- 5) figure out dropping / trunk, etc.

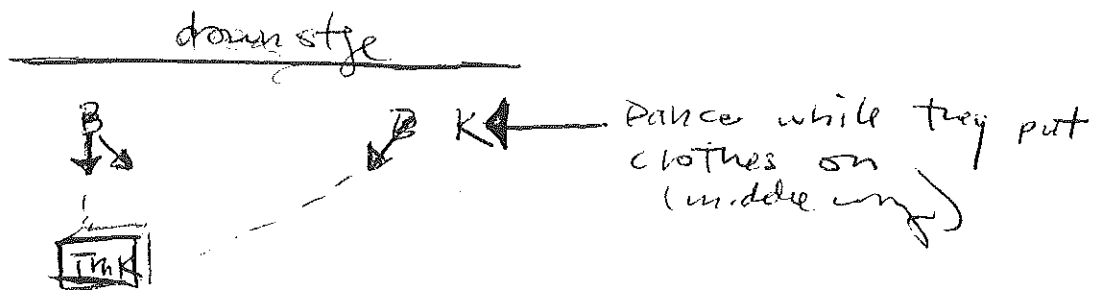
?
Katie in
trunk, Thrus
something
out?

11/6/98

Opening ÷ Kate in trunk
foot up / turned out
Ankle circles
fall over side of trunk
hands over side to pull head up
Step out
walk fwd.

opening to / everybody

Ballet Section

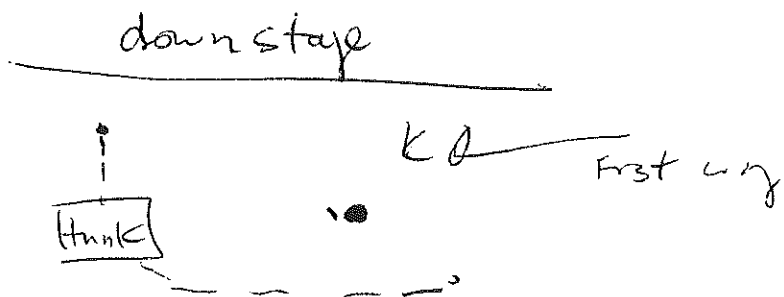


(Jazz) ————— (Jazz)

Jazz Section



Modern Section



Clothing Switches

Ballet: practice tutu
bik leotards / pink tights
ballet slippers
traras?

Influence
Story
accumulation

Modern: unitards / Biker tards
barefeet

Jazz: Old school? : colorful leos/tights
colorful legwarmers
Jazz shoes

Bik { Contemp: jazz pants
half top
darksweaters
sweatshirts

11/8/98

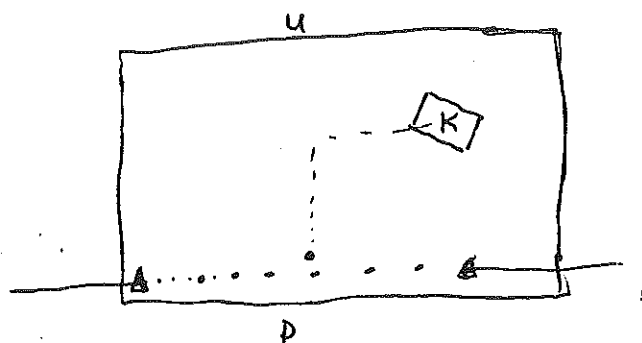
End: running? / ~~big~~ HEA: walking bkwards, taking
also... after conversions, ~~on~~ all, come out
on station "chhh".

OUTLINE - 11/8

OPENING out of trunk, etc,

1) Katie - mobaja combo in silence

Girls enter after katie's changyme



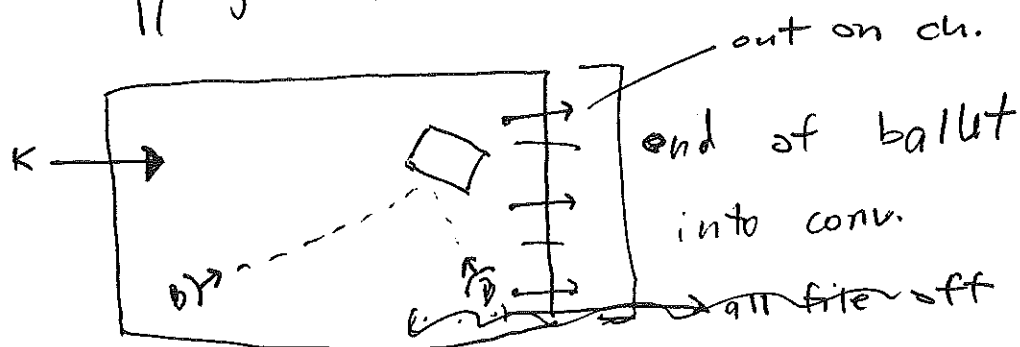
ham it up

Katie dissolves off sty ④ (to crossover)

Girls leave except ballet.

2) Ballet + Conversion

Jenny/megan combo



Change: B1: hair down, into scrunchies

1 leg of jazz pant

1 ballet shoe off, tights rolled up

B2: ~~united~~ ballet skirt off

united on - one leg short - one shoe off

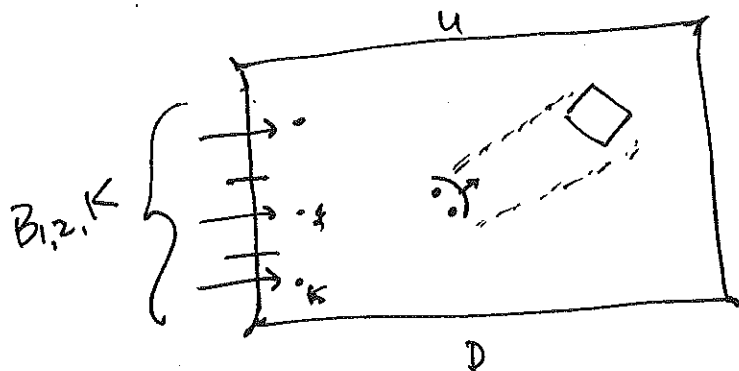
into Ballet conv. combo.

ex B₁ + B₂ exit w/ K on chh to ~~the~~ Jazz
(one each wing)

3) ~~Jazz~~ Jazz + Conversion

Yu. + Sav. enter ^{stg ②} as B₁ B₂ K off stg ①
↓
(jazz walks) etc

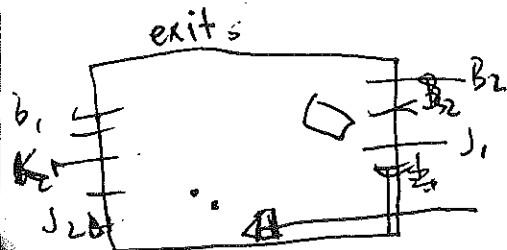
Jazz combo



B₁, B₂, K dance w/ J₁ + J₂ change

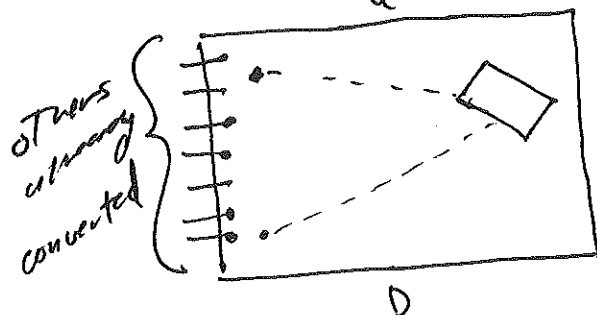
Changes: J₁: 1 jazz shoe off, one ballet slip on
ballet skirt on, Jazz pants off
one half of spandex shorts on

J₂: both jazz shoes off
hair up to bun
1 legwarmer on
bikentard over every thing



④ Modern + Conversion

Leah + Molly enter ^(planning) ~~pre~~ down str ④



mod Combo

Changes: m_1 : 1 leg of pink tights
1 Jazz shoe
1 Ballet Slipper

m_2 : ballet skirt
Jazz pant leg
hair up?
1 Jazz shoe

⑤ Closing (starts when guitar kicks in) after mod. conv.

Patterns: $3 \times 2 \times 2$



3: m_1, J_1, B_1 (run back to start from corner)


2: K, J_2 - fwd down str ④ to start from beg

2: m_2, B_2 - start from under hips, jump to floor sect.


Final (go H&R voices): one/two at a time begin to walk backwards, taking off what was put on...

11/8 REHEARSAL

Jenny 
Megan 

Yvette —
Sarah 

Molly 
Leah 

Katie 

Announce: 7-7¹⁰

- Gary next wk
- meet at 6:30?

- outline/info (trunk)
- # parts

- alternate time 11/22?
- the film showing

7¹⁰ - 7²⁰ - Opening

7²⁰ - 7³⁵ - Ballet

7³⁵ - 7⁵⁰ - Jazz

7⁵⁰ - 8⁰⁵ - Modern

8⁰⁵ - 8²⁰ - closing

8²⁰ - 8³⁰ - run

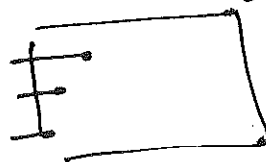
Conversions

Ballet - K starts at walk around
B + B₂ ~~etc~~ connect at ~~the~~ swing.
goes to flat, get up, off on "ch"

(close to end "facsimile thereof")

Jazz

K + B's start sty @ (1 each wing)
staggered

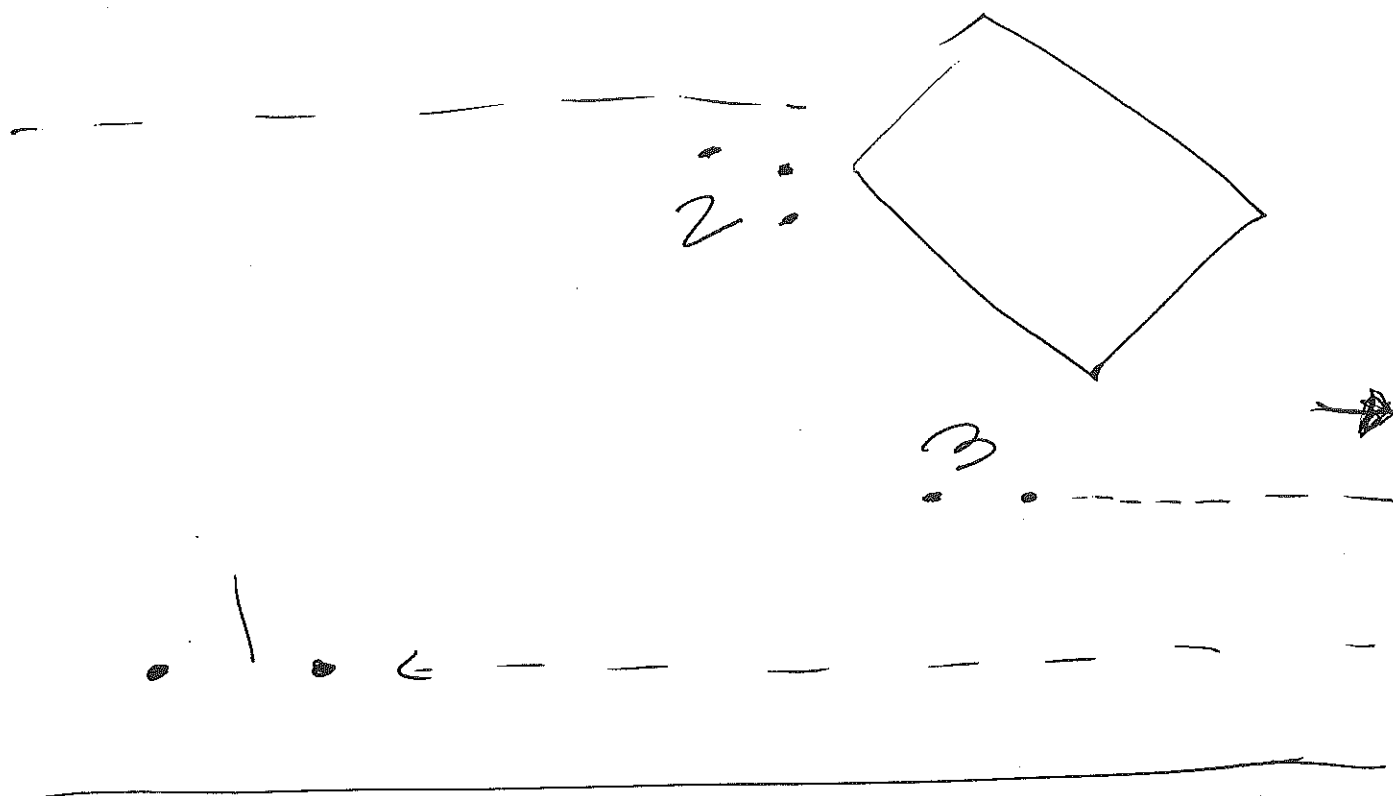


Y + Sa join in at prances
through walk fwd, walk around
and off as you approach wing
close to end: pamphlet showed...

Modern

all others start sty @
start at fall, roll

M + L join @



End notes:

(Grp 1) Starts w/ K, J₂
start from beg

(Grp 2) m, J, B,
start from corner
all the way to walk around,
then walk off

(Grp 3) m₂ B₂
start from arms up to swing
down

Then every one walks ~~for~~ front there
to start, drop off one by one into truck

11/15/98 - R H R S L

Megan ~~X~~
Lenny ~~—~~ ?

Leah ~~X~~

Molly ~~X~~

Yvette ~~X~~

Sarah ~~X~~

Katie ~~X~~

Announce

next wk - Mon - ?

7:30

To Do: clean music sections
work out changes
work on contrast!
finish modern.

"Disconnected Connections"

Text by Randolph Hostetler

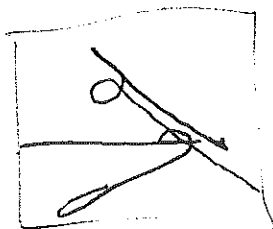
3 styles of dance

3-4 mins
complete

6 mins

12/4/98

Ballet - tembe - p.d.b flick, and, flick, and
pas de chat



p.d.b,

step arabesque, soutenu

waltz²⁻³, waltz^{2-3'}

chune - 2-3, chune, 2-3, chune 2-3

up! (on 6)



12/6/98

Opening: Levels

walk-in to places
hold, ~~use~~ fixing yourself
Switch after "false"

after final places are found, start talking one at a time

key placement

~~Shy~~

large

11 solutions

gritty ground
controlled off-balance

Ballot

in game center ~~at~~ we, ju x (pointe)

order

center off-center

fall/rear

drop/release

Theme / Variation

end of Jan

(simple)
phrase -

- retrograde (forwards/backwards)
- invert (up to down
back to front)
- diminution (missing parts)
- addition (motif)
- repetition (pieces, whole)
- order ~~of~~ (when things turn)

Develop a short phrase, and apply
the above techniques to the phrase. ~~xxxxxx~~
move people in and out combining
phrases, facing backwards/forwards



“The Second Dance”

After taking some time off over Christmas break, I came back with new ideas. I was disappointed with much of what I had created so far, but remembered that nothing was set in stone until the concert opened (and even then...). On January 10, 1999, I made a new start. With a head full of ideas, a new piece of music, and under 4 months to complete the work, I dug in. I began this time with just letting myself move to the music and recorded anything that might have worked. As I developed this movement, four distinct combinations came about. I taught these four to the dancers, and I knew already that this was better. I began organizing the girls into shapes that seemed to fit the movement and breaking down the music into phrases.

By the time everything was set, I had a combination of the four original variations mixed in and repeated here and there to match the structure of the music. When it came time to clean the piece once it had been set, I realized that I needed to specify and intention so that I could help the dancers understand the movement better. I went from telling them they were bugs to kids on playgrounds before I really understood what the dance was about. Looking at the movement, it became evident to me that there were a lot of quick directional changes. It was very stop and start and back and forth. Out of this discovery came the idea of push and pull, which would be the end result of this whole process. Once I realized the sense of push and pull in the piece, I added a greater connection of the girls to one another. I had them physically manipulating one another around and it finally became much more connected to the intention.

The second part of my journal contains mostly variations and notes about my intention. As the process went on, I began writing less and less and simply made changes

on the spot and without thinking. Less planning and more spontaneity seemed to bring a better life to the piece. This was also a crazy time for me with work and school, and while I wanted to put as much time and effort as I could into the work, physical time was limited.

1/10/99

NEW START : Katie
Yvette
Molly
Megan
Leah
Sarah

Rep: over side to side on knees?

①

Ron de jamb turn

Step out to ^{2nd} arabege low etacee

lean back down step to high digg.
(up) step P cross D arm tracks, then through
arm swings back around to hit

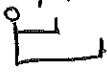
faette, pose (breath)

chaise, chunne (arms out)

Stop

Knicked in the knees

fall opposite

to 

roll down, legs / arms up

fall (vary) onto face and ~~and~~

② turn on flex parallel
rond casa, jeté

~~waltz~~ waltz (2) front, back

scoop to fouette arabesque tendue
chassé, pirouette parallel

tembe, pas de chat, to arabesque
arm curve

flex hand

pdb devant

grand verser versé, pdb

Jump

ooze forward, ① ~~team~~ out

contract to fall back

pull hands

1/19

4 combos

- ④ saute, ^{arabesque} saute turn, fp db
flick, flick turn
funky turn



push leg out to fall out, pivot
fall onto right leg
kick up funky attitude jump
to seconde
roll ~~up~~ right side to pose
arm swings violently over to throw
other back to arabesque fautive
chasse turn w/ left
pds en tourne front right
swing left around to ground
flip around to "ready to pounce"

1/24

• Megan ✓
• Katie ✓
• Molly ✓

• Leah ✓
• Yvette ✓
• Sarah ✓

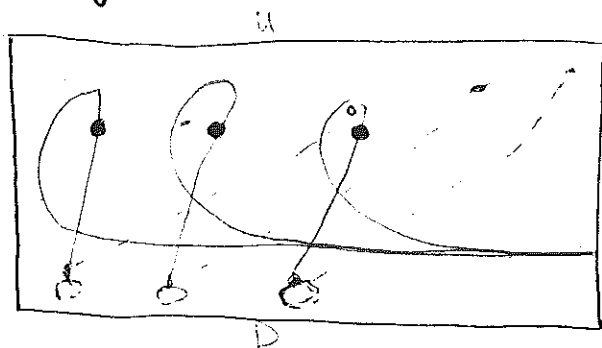
* Feb. 14

* 3 weeks + Gary's week 1/31 to finish sketching

* new piece, allegro

0:00

Opening Pattern



- - pulled to D-R
- - Break knees
combo to peek off
- Run on to pull •
to D-R
- sauté... to U-L
for flick combo
to funky jump

0:20

- 3 into balance ending hands on shoulders
- 2 to flip over run to back for step-parallel
through-sequence + kick arms

0:39

2/1/99

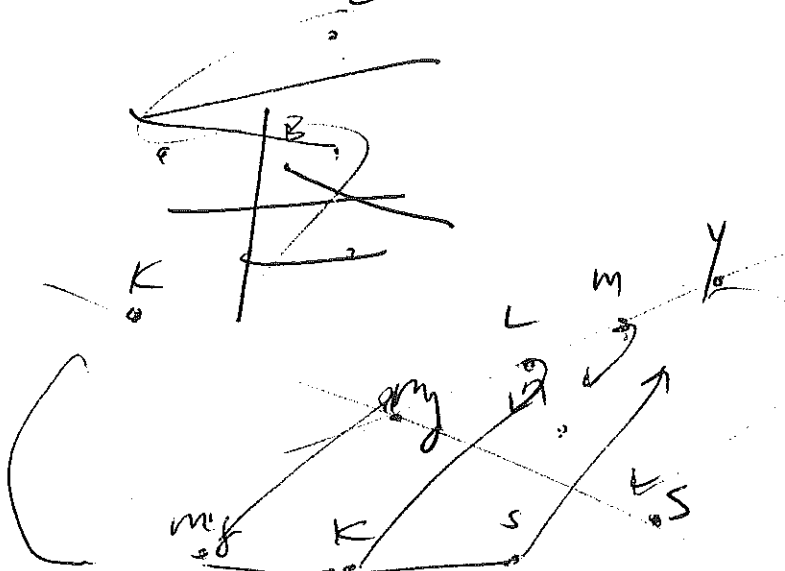
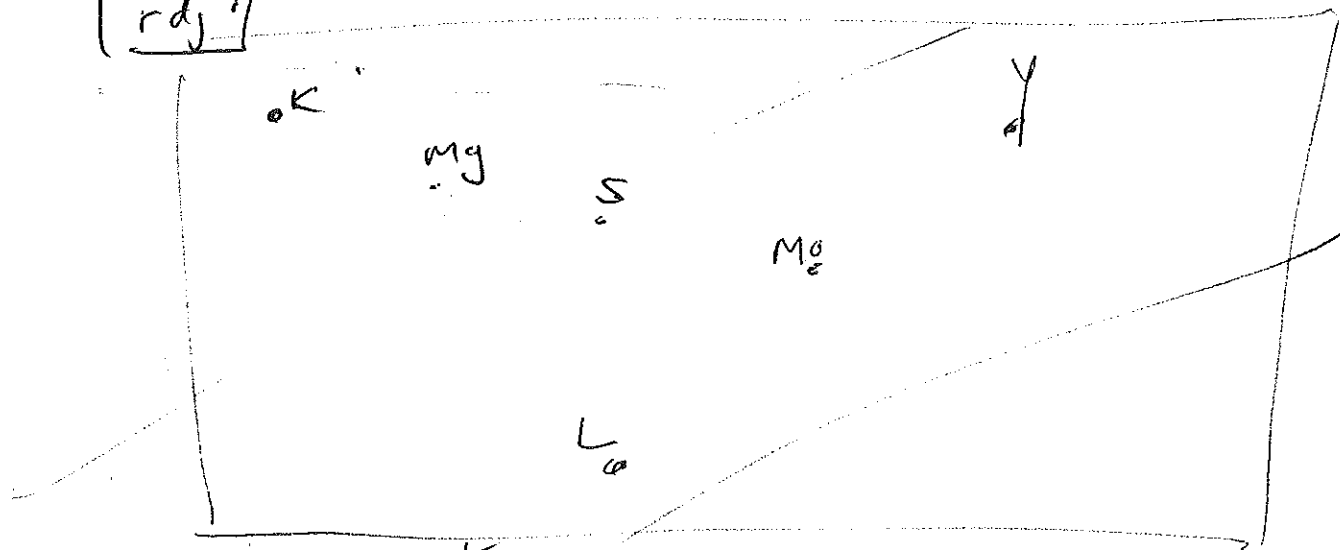
✓ Megan
✓ ABS Molly
✓ Yvette

Leah ✓
Sarah ✓
Katre ✓

Start

Channy up sq:

rdj:



Compass w/ ^{my} ~~map~~ ^{around}

— steer back

Flood

Big / little fights

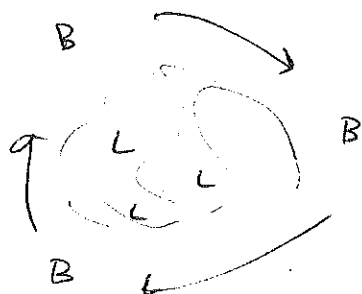
Bugs

- characters?
- costume

off back

Circle in (L)

(B)'s escape



2:09 (L)'s are smashed down slowly

2:25 slow picks up - (B) ~~drop - celebrate~~ phase

2:26 boom - (B)'s back in celebrate
picky picky

2:48 cut phrase - others out! original 2e →

builds heavy, deep (duet)

3:09 - boom, gets picky

3:17 - driving, fully - everyone back in

(3:37) Break,

misc.

to original
melodies + others

(4:00) burst comes in
~~stronger~~ stronger

(4:12) high comes in

BUILD!!!!

Slow - intards

(4:43) Steps, build quickly
to end

(4:59) Break

last phrase

2:09 D's are smashed slowly, trying
to perk up on flicks

2:20 D's are dragged off

2:26 ACCENT B's back to celebrate
music: picky, plucky

2:42/3 (original ee →)
D's back in

2 L's & 2 B's off

DUE T as music builds, heavy, deep

3:09 accent - duet

3:17 (driving, falling notes)
everyone back in

3:37 ACCENT - melodies come together - everybody

4:08 - BASS - low in

4:12 HIGH - in

BUILD - RITARDS ...

4:43 - Stops, builds plucky to end

4:49 - BREAK

FINAL PHRASE

2/7/99

Katie ✓

negan ✓

molly ✓

Sarah ✓

Yvette ✓

Leah ✓

9B/14 @ convo?

playful, no cute!
work phase late

no cuteness

off energy to be right

Bg — repeat phrase

luxuriate — phrase on de jamb
timing

swirling — direct

fall — drift for each

①

chase turn ②

grab hands

~~flip~~ struggle

flip back

round around

step, pds de chat

pivot - um & second

chase - relay to ~~R~~ U-R

stop - flip back

to turned in - facing back

pivot to drop over back

walk 4-5

②

1-2 (~~1~~ 1 goes down)

2 hops over

chase, contract side

1 bends over

2 bends backward onto back

walk 4-5 steps

1 pushes 2 up to turned in

hop catch ~~left~~ lean to ~~R~~ cross

pivot to drop over back left over

~~walk~~ 4-5 to stop ground 1 left

push out left

Pivot around chop over

Curve step

Slide - R, L, R, step hop

step

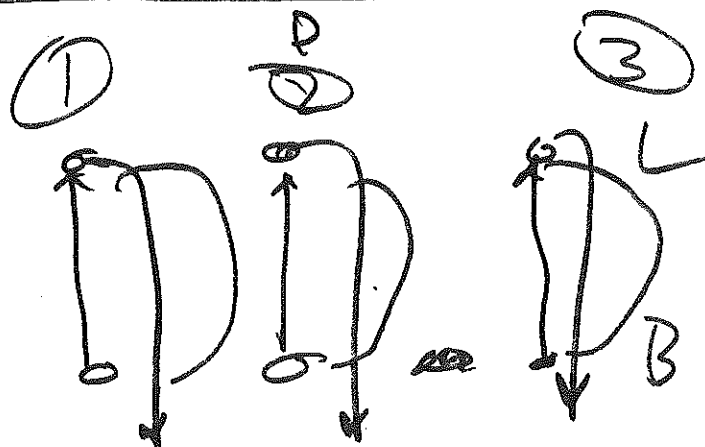
touch knees

step

lay

stop

funky funky funky



after butt bump,

2-3 to SL

1 to SR into PBJ

1:33 - 1:50

everyone
after
beg. rpt.

Group 2 - beginning chaper
play w / reverse grp 1

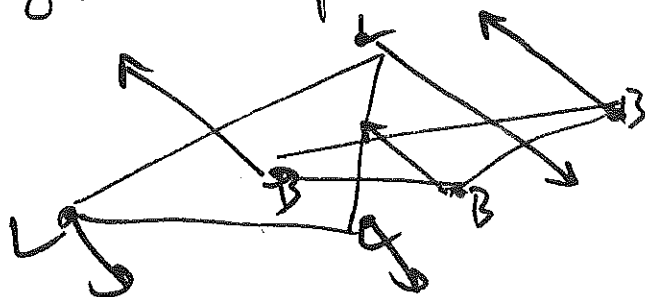
figure out a fall into duets
Katie / Yvette go off.

lines re-form after duets
but reverse, grp. 2 runs
forward to swirl around

RDJ - on diagonal
opposing each other

Big 8 dos phrase ~~front~~ forward

Little 8 = backward



megan/molly

Katie/Leah

Yvette/Sarah

Yvette tosses Sarah
towards Katie, Katie
tosses Leah towards
① - they go around
to do part II (hop-over)
megan/molly go ②
to come from up ①
corner w/ part I
(chasse turn)

after duet - run in from dig
to kick second, step, hop over
Step back, turn, pull into
dig going through each other.

To

Original

-
- Set Group 2 Beg
 - Reverse group 1?
 - falls and exits before 4's

Duet 4's

① Megan/Molly ② Leah/Sarah

- work Yvette and Katie back into
lines

- crossing w/ butt bumps

- pulling around to group 20J
section

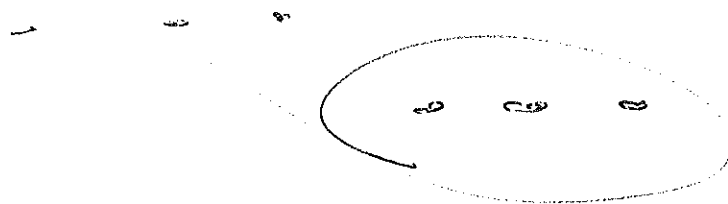
- circle step to wall off

Group 2 all around at
beg

END —

all can a ~~to~~ can a
to beg, but reverse

Group I - to floor - runs
to



Group II - to saute can b's, turn
Suspension jump

every one hops back, Group
I sprint to fall

+ couples / to make backs

① relj combo
by spot

② balance combo

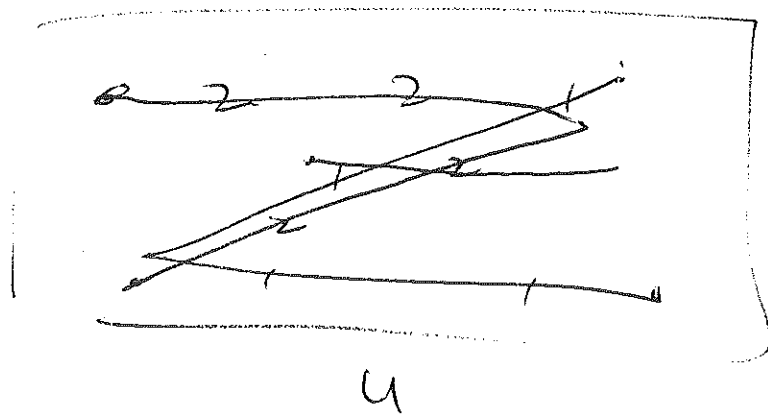
③ ~~opening for~~
step, fair

Yvette
lean
milly

Sara
Kaitre
megan

time to a

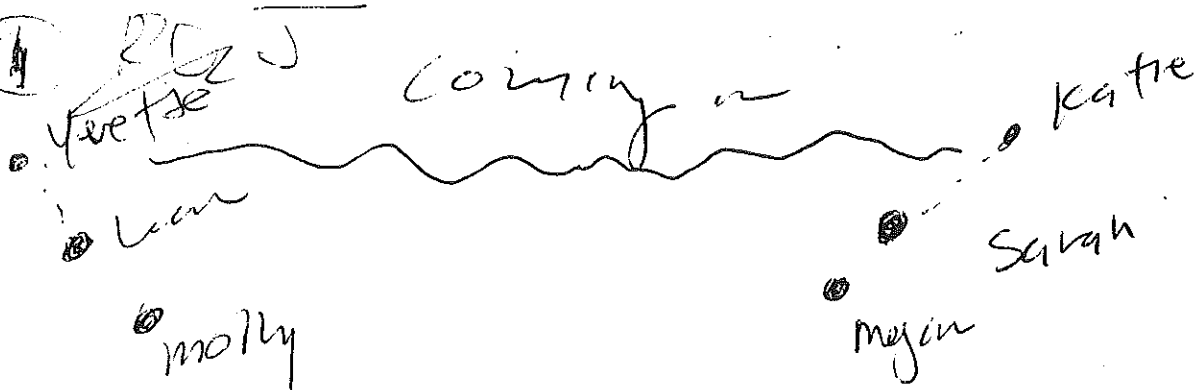
1



2

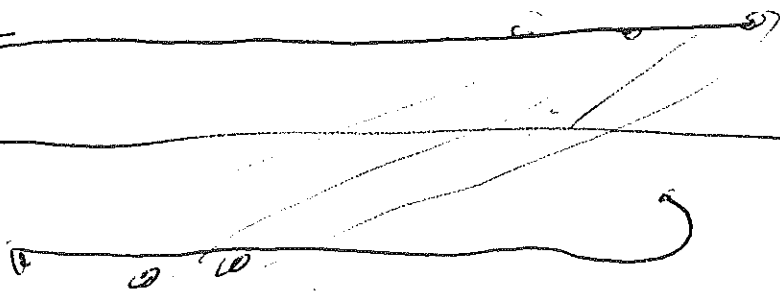
split group & after and

1

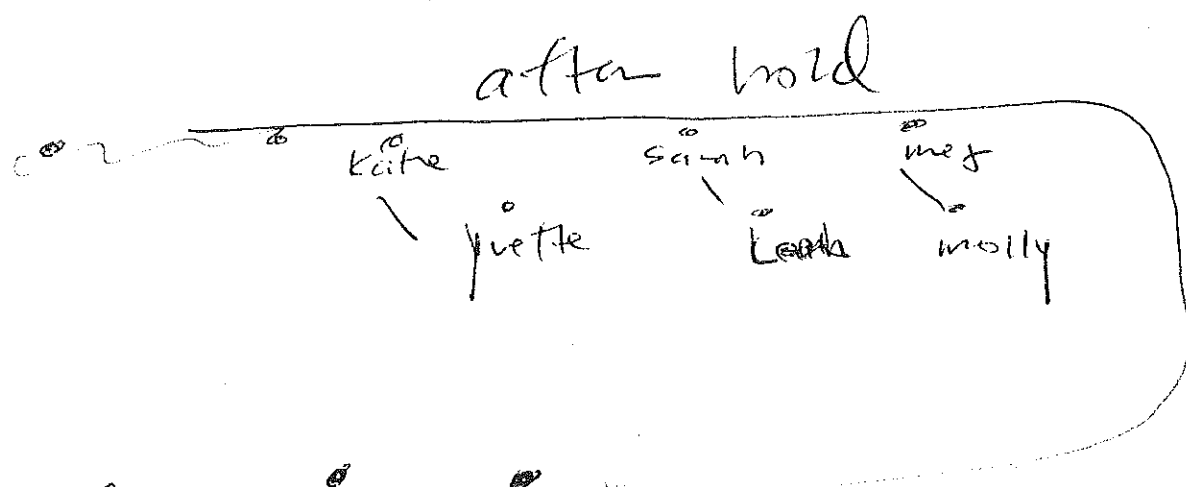


msk

mlv



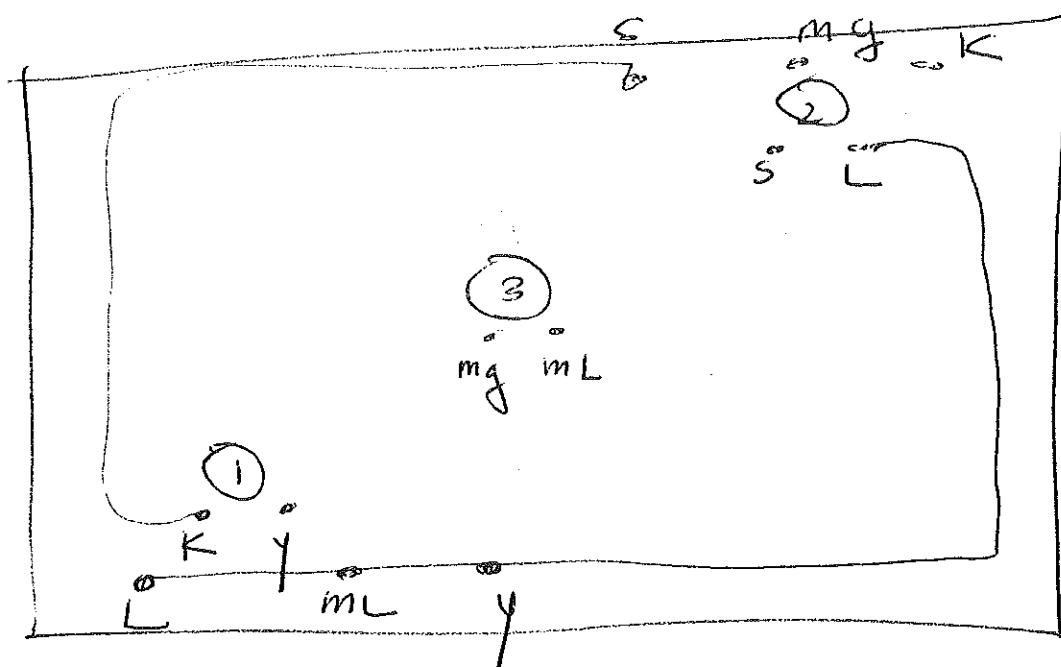
Megan Sarah Katie
 Molly Leah Yvette



Mey Sarah Katie

- ① RDJ = Katie / Yvette
- ② Balanré = Sarah / Leah
- ③ Step / Fan = Mey / Molly

From end to same



- Going Over Last WK
- Teaching 3 new parts
- Put Together
- ~~Are~~ Extra Kuhl
- Yvette/Katrina - Tuesday
Covers

3/14/99 - 28th Cleaning

wed 7:30 - 9

molly —

Katie ✓

Yvette ✓

Leah —

Sarah —

Megan ✓

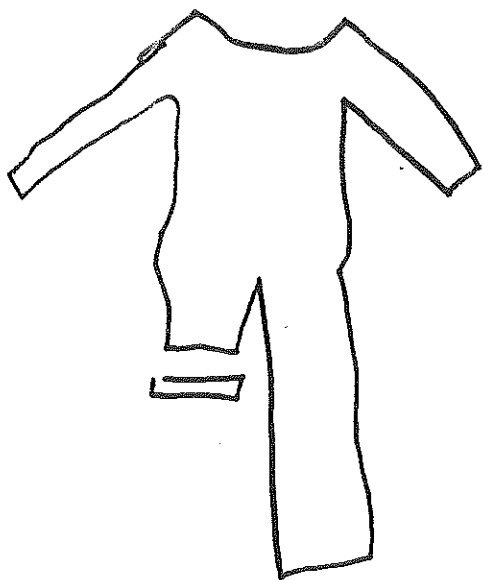
Notes:

Alt. Rhyth time - Tues eve? wed. eve?

Showing = 3/31 ~~Sat~~ 7-9

7 costumes - any body bean get clear up

push/pull
definite mount
relationship



Reflection on the Experience of Creating *Two Sides To Everything*

From start to finish, I can say that I learned a lot about myself through this project. Having choreographed the year before and being able to compare both experiences to each other, I realized that I over-think before I choreograph. I had a much easier time coming up with movement when I just played the music and improvised than when I told myself to come up with a phrase for 32 particular counts in the music. There is a part of me that needs to be organized, and by the end I had learned to switch that person off when I was creating movement.

I also learned a lot about my process in general. The first year I choreographed, I also essentially had two dances as well. I seem to want to throw everything away and start over as I develop the “first piece”. I’m learning a greater appreciation for the word process and exactly what it means. I tend to want things done and put away without going through any sort of experience sometimes. This is what makes me most disappointed about creating dance. I get upset with myself for not succeeding the first time, which is a habit I learning to get away from. In almost any other area of my life, I can go in, get the work done, and leave. In dance, that just isn’t possible. If I just allowed myself the time to develop and cherish the experience in itself, I think I would be much more stable emotionally during the choreographic process.

Another challenge for me was working with my own peers. I know how difficult it can be to respect and understand someone who is going through the exact same life experience as you and learning in the same way. Sometimes, I felt like I didn’t want to be upfront with my dancers because of this reason. I felt privileged that they were, in a sense, giving themselves to my project out of the desire to dance. In student work, the

process is much more difficult for the dancers as well. While professional choreographers don't always have a sense of what they're doing with their work, they usually have the experience to act like they do. Sometimes, I just didn't know what to say to the girls other than, "I don't know what I want in this piece anymore". It's frustrating, as I've experienced with other student choreographers, to maintain the same relationship with peers in this environment. I was lucky to have a cast who was very willing to give of time and energy most of the time.

Watching the piece performed, I had a sense of pride not only in what I created, but in the dancers for standing by me even when I didn't know where I was going with the work. I was scared even up into the first performance that it wouldn't go as I had wanted. The second performance proved to be the best of all four and I finally saw the work that I had created with every intention I had imagined. The sharp, dull shapes of the backdrop contrasted with the holes cut out of the costumes. The icy blueness of the stage created a perfect environment for my intention to be displayed. It was an incredible feeling to watch from the wings, in constant motion, as if my own twists and turns offstage would help them perform better. Regardless, I was glad to have not been satisfied with my first product. The extra work and effort paid off in the end, and made for a whole other learning experience that will stay with me forever.

The Role of Dance and Dancing

What Role Has Dance and Will Dance Play In My Life?

Most importantly, dance has been source of true, personal happiness. In very few areas in my life have I found the honest joy that I have found through dance. I have learned so much, not only about dance, at LMU, but also about myself and the person within the body that dances. Each class has provided me with a different perspective on movement. Whether I liked the class or not, I came out knowing something else. Whether it was that I never wanted to do that type of dance again, or I never wanted to stop doing it, there was something.

I have definitely expanded into modern dance since I've been at LMU. I loathed going to modern my first year here, and although I had taken it before a few times, never saw the technique in modern that I can see clearly now. Opening up to the modern dance world has pushed my dance ability to a completely different realm. It has been a tremendous benefit to helping me release in my body and find my weight. It has also helped me learn how to adjust body in relation to my center, and finding flow in movement. Modern dance has freed my body and given me a much broader movement vocabulary to work from.

Coming from a mostly ballet background, classes here have helped me to continue to expand my classical technique and to learn the discipline of the body that keeps the technical side of my dancing in tune. I have become a much stronger dancer because of ballet and finally working on classical male steps has increased my strength in larger movements, particularly in the air. Within ballet class, I worked specifically on the entire body moving as a unit and making sure each body part coordinated with the other body part. This essential coordination will no doubt be beneficial to my dance career.

Jazz class was basically just a release for me. I never worried too much about technique, but more about just letting my body move to music that I enjoyed listening to. Jazz has allowed me to work on performing specifically to a group of people. The focus in much of jazz dance is on the audience and “selling” the dance to them. This aspect of dance may not be relevant to what I think I want to pursue necessarily, but may come in handy down the road somewhere. I feel like I got a broad range of jazz techniques while here at LMU. From classic jazz to commercial and now Fosse, I got a well-rounded sense of what jazz is about.

For world dance, I took Irish Dance and I really enjoyed it. While I probably could have done without the stiffness and tightness of the body (I don’t really need any help with that), it was good for my brain to do something completely different. I learned a great deal about using only the lower half of the body to initiate and support the movement. It was difficult not to use the arms to help gain momentum for movement. We also learned about the Irish culture, which was also beneficial for me. While my parents had taught me a lot about it, I was able to see it from a different perspective and see how traditional dance plays an important role in Ireland.

In terms of composition classes, my first year at LMU was filled with this new experience of creating dance. Fundamentals of Dance Composition helped me gain a basic understanding of all of the important aspects of dance choreography that I later encountered in Styles and Forms and in my own choreography. More than anything, I think the class was, for me, a chance just to let go and see where my body took me, to be silly and not care what I looked like. It was a way to just let me be me and create a movement voice and vocabulary for myself to draw upon later. I was introduced to

topics such as energy and all of the different types of movement qualities that I had been dancing all along and never even recognized. I became much more aware of dance through this class and it was the beginning of a new way of looking at dance for me.

Dance Styles and Forms built upon the material from Fundamentals and expanded them further than most of us really ever thought we could go. Rose was a tremendous asset to us as dancers (no matter how tough it was), and I really treasure her keen eye in critiquing our movement and getting us out of our individual habitual movement patterns. Through dance studies relating to particular movement qualities, we were able to find a different dimension of ourselves as dancers. I really saw how bound I was when I moved and was forced to find breath and flow in my movement. The final project on a choreographer (I did Mark Morris) gave me the opportunity to interpret the work of another artist into my own work and create based on that choreographer's guidelines. I learned how to work within a certain aesthetic and create movement that represented someone else's style and not simply my own (which was a great challenge!).

Constantly doing dance day in and day out, it was great to finally sit down and really analyze *what* we were doing! Laban Movement Analysis gave me the opportunity to "put a name with a face" in terms of movement. Learning the Laban terminology for movement literally opened up my vocabulary as a dancer. It has given me a much broader range in which to speak about dance and express dance through words as well as movement. LMA helped me to see dance as a science as well as an art.

Choreographically, I am more aware of the entire space, quality, and energy of the movement I am creating. We didn't do much with Labanotation, but the short bit that we

did learn could be beneficial if I ever have to interpret a work that has been notated or notate one of my own works.

I could think of many better places to be than Dance History at 8:00 in the morning, but the course was nonetheless beneficial to understanding the dance world from beginning to present. As a dancer, I had never taken the time to look at dance throughout such a broad span of time and see how it evolved and changed. Doing so gave me the opportunity to know where dance was coming from and better understand why we do what we do today. The videos were a great learning tool that simply exposed us to as much dance visually as possible. History has always been my worst subject, but being able to look visually at the past and because it was something I was interested in, made it easier for me to get through.

To Dance is Human was an experience of community for me. I have never felt that I've known the people in a class as well as we all knew each other by the end of the course. It was an experience of such varied subject matter that touched on so many different areas of life and how dance affects those areas. I learned about many different cultures and how dance plays a role in their lives. I learned about myself and how I view dance (in which I made many new discoveries 😊) I began to make the connection between the human being and dance and how the two are inseparable throughout every society. Movement exists in some form in every part of our world and I learned just how essential it is to us as people in the universe.

Despite problems in the structure of Kinesiology, I learned quite a bit about the body and about injuries. Having never taken anatomy, this was an important course for

me to get in tune with the actual physical realm of my body. I was able to make many connections to previous injuries and learned how to take basic care of them.

The Dance Science course for the second semester has so far been phenomenal. Not only are we learning about the body and its many parts but we get to relate everything to DANCE!!!! I'm making so many new connections to the way that my body works and how dancers differ from other people physically. The class is a perfect blend between the science of the body and the art of dance. I only wish we had the class more than once a week...it will absolutely be one of the most beneficial pieces of information that I take into my dance career.

While I don't see myself teaching dance at the moment, Principles of Teaching Dance gave me a basic understanding of how to do so should I choose that route in the future. Learning about the brain and how humans connect psychologically to movement was very interesting to me. I saw proof that dance was affecting the way people lived and how teaching children to dance and create when they are young is incredibly beneficial to everyone! The course was a first-time run and was a bit confusing in terms of structure, but I feel like I came away with a better sense of how to train other dancers properly and how people respond psychologically to dance.

Unrelated to dance specifically, Philosophy of Art was no doubt the most difficult class I have taken at LMU. The material was some of the most confusing I have ever laid eyes on. I have to admit, though, that I learned a lot about aesthetics and how to look at art without judging it necessarily. Most of the information I learned in the course still makes very little sense to me. But I was proud of myself for making connections to the

way that I look at art and learning about how to philosophically analyze our way of thinking about art in general.

Finally, the performance aspect of my education at LMU was certainly priceless. No class can teach what is learned on stage in the moment of performing. I had the opportunity to work with so many great and varied choreographers. I feel like each concert I had the perfect blend of dance styles to challenge myself both physically and mentally as a dancer. I can't imagine any other venue where I would have had the opportunity to perform such a wide range of dance. Performing gives me the opportunity to put to use so many of the new discoveries I make at LMU and helps me see more clearly their connection to creating dance that sends a message. Learning how to communicate that message through movement becomes the challenge for each performance. My experience as a dancer would be missing something without having this type of experience in my training.

Having just written almost 6 pages on what I've learned about dance at LMU, I'm sort of surprised. When I look back and ponder all of these important classes, it's hard to understand the times when I didn't want to go or I was too tired to dance. I remember so many days where I didn't even want to get out of bed, let alone roll around on the floor for 2 hours. But once I get into the studio and get moving, there seems to be something that takes that bad energy away. If I have learned anything about myself in dance it is that it is a haven for me. Dance has enriched so many other areas of my life and given me a much deeper understanding of the person I am today.

To have this kind of experience, I certainly had to take a few risks. Risking in dance is much easier for me than in "real life". I know that out of each risk that I take in

dance I will learn something, good or bad. I feel like I've risked most of all the way that I think. I have challenged myself to be open to anything that I might encounter in dance. I could see as I came to LMU my first year that I was going to experience things that may not be comfortable at first. I told myself that I wouldn't let my uneasiness or initial resistance get in the way of discovering a new level of dance for me. This risk has certainly been beneficial to me and has created in my everyday life the ability to now allow me to discover myself outside of dance by doing the uncomfortable and getting over the hurdle of feeling uncomfortable or self-conscious.

It's hard to say what I would have done differently at LMU because anything that didn't go as I wanted usually ended up for the better in the end anyway. I hate the feeling of regret, and don't like to say to myself "I wish I hadn't...or I wish I had...". But I will anyway... While I was serious about dance when I came to LMU, I wish that I would have been as serious as I am now. The urgency of finding my place in the dance world beyond LMU has created in me a more mature sense of discipline. I give up less easily and push through harder times in dance now than I did even a year ago. I know that the college experience is about finding that level, but had I had the same drive from the beginning, who knows where I would be now...maybe worse off for not having followed "the process"?

If anything has helped me learn more at LMU, it would have to be the experience with the people, both dancers and teachers of dance. I feel lucky to be a dance major at LMU because it is to me much more of a community of people rather than a major. I don't think any other department holds the same sense of togetherness that we hold with each other. Day in and day out we are constantly surrounded by one another, challenging

each other, and supporting each other. Teachers push me until I think I can't handle anymore, and then, shortly after, I realize how beneficial they are to me. There is absolutely no doubt that individual attention played a great role in the quality of my dance education LMU. I never felt like a number on a card or a name on a list. I knew that each teacher had my best interest in mind and guided me toward that, no matter how hard the struggle.

If anything got in my way of learning, it was my own mind. I have the most varied temperament of anybody I know, and I am positive that my own stubbornness and attitude got in the way of learning occasionally (OK, maybe more than occasionally). There are days in dance when I am my own worst enemy. My brain is telling my body something and my body is telling my soul something else and somewhere in the process, I lose focus and begin to shut down. My introverted personality creates in me a constant inner voice who is also moody! I know that overcoming this internal struggle is the key to how I will evolve even further as a dancer.

I feel like I received such a wide variety of experiences at LMU that it is difficult to say what I would have wanted to do otherwise. Sometimes, I just wished I had fewer things to do and had more time to focus on just me as a dancer and not every other personality that I have outside of the studio. But with my need to have continuous motion and "stuff" in my life, that wish seems impossible. I feel like I went beyond what I ever thought I could have experienced in three short years. Thinking back to my first year, I feel like a completely different dancer as well as a person.

Becoming that different person has been an interesting journey for me. I know that there are many people out there who never have the same sort of journey that an arts

education provides. There are so many things about this dance program that are beneficial to any person. Having talked with prospective students as they drop in and out, I'm never at a loss for something to tell them about the program. It seems like no matter how small we are, there is a place for every type of dancer. Certainly the faculty are a huge part of the success of the program, but it is the sense that I was a human dancer and not a machine that makes me feel lucky to have been here. I think any high school graduate or prospective student is looking for a place to feel comfortable and that they have unlimited opportunities with whatever they choose to do. As a dancer, those possibilities are endless at LMU. I don't think I could have come up with any project or career goal related to dance that wouldn't be possible through this program. It's so important to give people choices in life, and I got that here; it's a strong part of what draws me to LMU.

Looking at dance right now, I see it playing a very prominent role in the near future and hopefully beyond that. I feel very anxious to explore the next level of dance for me as I know it will be a continuous discovery process. I'm positive that I want to dance in a company as a career and continue developing my choreographic skills. At this point, though, it's so hard to say where I'm going to be because I feel so overwhelmed with the endless possibilities. Certainly New York is a terrific place to start, but I have also given thought to the possibility of exploring European companies as well. Regardless of where I end up, I know that in some way, some form, dance will absolutely, positively, without a doubt be in me.

What is Dance?

What Is Dance?

Depending on one's heritage, morals and values, dance can be many different things. My own personal view of dance is impacted by the fact that I am a male dancer. From my first introductions to dance at age 13 to the present, dance continues to help me to really *see* the life that unfolds around me. Dance has been a true source of happiness for me; a way to physically express my internal self through movement. While the type of satisfaction I receive from this expression is not gender specific, there are many aspects of gender that continue to impact the dance world.

Gordon Johnson sums up his experience with the decision to become a dancer: "Choosing dance caused me to act out the unthinkable for most men in America. It was illogical, compared to the mental tracks we're given to slide into law, business, medicine, or engineering. The arts are extra. They're frivolous. They're foreign" (Johnston, 21-22). The experience of becoming a male dancer is atypical in American society and often seen as inappropriate and absurd in our culture. Such assumptions provoke a closer look into why these issues arise with the idea of the male dancer.

If I have learned anything about American culture through dance, it is that we place an inordinate amount of emphasis on gender roles. While current society is pushing away from this way of thinking, there seems to be no way of getting completely around the issue. "In America, people attach dance to feminine expression, as though anything 'pretty' or associated with women is therefore inferior and beneath the serious interest of 'real' men...Most American parents don't want their sons to dance because of negative stereotypes and stigmas. In Europe, ballet training for little boys is considered

an honor” (Johnston, 156). In most other cultures across the world, dancing has no societal gender restriction. In Bali, young boys are actually taught female dance roles first to instill in them a sense of value for the feminine perspective. It isn’t until they have understood this stage that they begin to learn the male dances of the culture.

In American society, money equals power. Because we are living within a culture that often places more value on material than on the true happiness of an individual, we are forced to face this sad statistic. Most male dancers make far less money than a powerful executive or a well-respected medical doctor and so the emphasis placed on allowing young boys to experience dance is lessened. Combined with the absence of teaching dance within American elementary and secondary school systems, there is little or no chance that a young boy will even be exposed to dance before the age of 18. The greater issue in America lies in the undervaluing of the arts in. Budget cuts to existing programs and lack of support of the general public only create less opportunities for children to discover creative arts.

An environment created without the influence of the arts, is one that keeps us trapped within the mold of gender-specific everything that goes around us. An introduction to a creative art such as dance at an earlier age may help alleviate such a strict emphasis on living within an inappropriate socially constructed ideal. Regardless of the way that society views dancers, dancers continue to reflect what goes on in our culture as they create their art. Dances are made with specific intent to showcase life in our society and alert people to what is going on around them. Looking at the art form in this way, it is evident that dance is very connected to humanity. We dance the life that

goes on around us and challenge ourselves to do such in the most creative and innovative ways.

As dance is connected to the people around which it is created, society inevitably plays a role in the formation of stereotypes regarding dance. With regards to the male dancer, the masculine identity created psychologically and often unconsciously in children, affects the way male dancers are viewed in our culture. Boys are generally taught to be tough, without fear, and powerful. Toys are the greatest indicator of the beginnings of gender role construction in American society. Television commercials show boys playing with warriors, machines, and the like that develop in them the need for power and control. Female toys, such as dolls and cosmetic products put them already into the typical female roll of mother/caretaker and beautiful object. The construction of this identity often leaves out the possibility of males even being interested in dance in an attempt to keep them within these socially constructed boundaries. Such boundaries are created in many different ways as a child matures:

...our sense of differentiation, of separateness from others, as well as our psychological and cultural experience and interpretation of gender and sexual difference, are created through psychological, social and cultural processes, and through relational experiences...they are part of a system of asymmetrical social relationships embedded in inequalities of power, in which we grow up as selves, and as women and men....they are produced developmentally and in our daily social and cultural lives.

(Chodorow, 15-16)

Because dance is often ignorantly viewed as a feminine art in America, society is unable to accept any sort of masculinity involved in it, and so creates stereotypes about male dancers.

The most notorious stereotype facing male dancers is homosexuality. Becoming part of a “feminine art,” one is often subjected to lifelong battles with this issue. While there is no denying that “male homosexuals are disproportionately attracted to dance,” there is no proof that the act of dancing *makes* a man a homosexual. Judith Lynne Hanna suggests that “for gay people and involvement in the dance world can alleviate or be an escape from their ‘problem’ (Hanna, 130). Because dance allows for an indirect expression of language and feelings, it is a wonderful place for homosexuals to feel at home and comfortable with themselves. Regardless of numbers and reasons, our often homophobic society does not allow themselves the chance to see any worth in the male dancer. Because the role of male dancers often steps outside the boundaries of this socially constructed masculine identity, there is an immediate attempt to classify him as something else. The shallow association of homosexuality to femininity combined with the assumption that dance is a female art makes for a seemingly worthy case against male dancers. Those who are truly connected to the art of dance can see that such assumptions are largely unfounded.

My own personal battles with the homosexual stereotype began in junior high and early high school and I began to see firsthand just how quick people are quick to judge. I couldn’t believe how ignorant young people were or how rude they could be to me. I couldn’t help but feel sorry for the way they had been influenced by our society, most likely their parents. At such a young age, it is sad to see children already putting into practice such stereotypes. Over the last few years, however, I have learned enough to understand the reasons behind the stereotypes themselves. This does not diminish their

effect on my childhood, but simply gives a foundation to answer in my own head why these assumptions exist in our society.

While much of modern dance works to suspend the myth that male and females must play a particular sex role within a dance, there are still physical differences that give the male a somewhat different dance vocabulary. In ballet, this is quite obvious as the male works through steps that were created decades ago and reflect a completely different era. Classical ballet displays noble, strong men whose purpose lies in supporting the ballerina *en pointe*. As time went on, this role changed slightly, but even contemporary ballets have a similar make-up in terms of sex roles.

Through modern dance, partnering seemed to initially be less important. Many solo artists were beginning to emerge with their own style and attempting to stray away from the boundaries of classical ballet technique. It is “not so much a system or technique as an attitude toward dance, a point of view that encourages artistic individualism and the development of personal choreographic styles” (Anderson, 165). Because modern dance allows for much more individual freedom than ballet, and because the roles of the male and female began to be blurred.

Society's attitudes on gender are also represented in dance. As dance is a representation of a given culture, there is a strong connection to the relationships between people in a dance, male or female. The initial classical ballets are evident of a period where women needed the strength and support of men to survive and men were good for nothing else. Men were only on stage as *porteurs* to lift and carry the women, showing them off as objects to the public. Modern dance began to adapt societal roles and attempt to create more gender equality as well as ambiguity. Current modern dance even reverses

gender roles, making yet another statement about the way that our current society is functioning. Historically, dance reflects the particular time period by taking societal norms and displaying them through movement:

Socially constructed kinetic discourse conveyed male dominance in the ballet tradition beginning with Louis XIV. Modern dance, birthed by women contesting the patriarchy of ballet and the broader society, gave females new gender images of independence, stature, and leadership, and even eliminated gender with androgyny and role reversals.

(Senelick, 236)

Once the path is chosen, the discussion of the male in dance leads one to question exactly how is the experience of dancing different for a man than for a woman. Because American attitudes often prevent young boys from dancing, most males do not discover dance until well into adolescence, putting them at a much different place to start from than their female dance colleagues. This creates a number of issues both physically and mentally that may impact the male dancer:

The male's body, being tighter than the more practiced female's, is more difficult to reshape...Since most men begin dancing late...men don't have rules of thumb or predetermined plateaus as do women, who are moved more carefully through stages in dance...Male dance students are easily agitated. They compete against women, each other, and themselves. Time related to practice and skill growth translates into a haunting "Is it too late for me?"

(Johnston, 101)

Johnston's statement certainly sums up much of my own experience in dance, especially at the beginning. While I started at age 13, I was already beginning to ask myself if dance would ever be a career option for me. I had been in athletics all throughout my childhood and had the energy and endurance for dance, but I was still frustrated. I felt like I would never achieve the kind of technique that I needed to be successful and it was difficult to watch all the females in my classes already have so

much of that suppleness and flexibility. Within the last few years, I finally made a connection to the realization that my body is never going to do everything as well as I want it to. Physical limitations are certainly no excuse, but are a present reality that should be graciously accepted. I feel fortunate to have changed my body as much as I have, and have to continuously remind myself of the achievements I have made rather than lose myself in a sea of 360 degree turnout and such other fantasies. As I now begin to make another transition from life as a student into a larger, broader career as a dancer, I know it will be important to keep in mind my own physical abilities and learn how to adapt and expand those capabilities to support my dance career.

Career and job opportunities for male dancers are so much greater that it often seems to me that it's easier, in a way, to not give everything and still know that something will always be there. It isn't the fact that any man can walk into an audition and get a job without question, but there is certainly a different sort of pressure on the female competing against so many more people. It's an odd thought that sometimes comes to mind, and it's a specifically male experience to know that simply by numbers, the odds of getting a job are much greater. Auditioning for summer intensive workshops in high school, I remember maybe 15 boys and 250 girls in class going for 10-20 spots in the session. I knew that I had to dance to a certain level in order to get in, but I'm sure it couldn't compare to what the girls had to face. Besides, they were generally looking to take as many males as they could find, whereas girls were up against number limitations.

Over the last couple of years, I've had a few experiences when I felt the impact of this issue and it made me think a lot about how different my dance experience is as a male. I have an awkward feeling when people who don't even know me come up to me

after a class or performance and offer me a job when I know there are so many girls who have been dancing for so much longer and are dying to get a job. I feel fortunate to have this type of opportunity, and I guess that's "just how things go," but it also brings up another issue psychologically for me. I begin to question my own worth as dancer. I wonder if I'm selected because I dance well and fit the part, or if I'm the last male on the face of the earth who is available. I don't imagine this is much of an issue with female dancers, but it has certainly played a role in my own image of myself as a male dancer.

Gordon Johnston discusses the use of males as dancers in performance and the way that male dancers are moved possibly to easily through the dance world:

Too many people in charge require less of male dancers or tolerate their amateurism. Too much of the male dancer's repertoire, especially at the student-performance level, is deliberately geared to show him off to advantage by utilizing the few movement that he does well while avoiding his weaknesses instead of encouraging the dancer to overcome them. Choreography is shaped to ability, and the male dancer comes off as a tin soldier or co-track for his female partner.

(Johnston, 101)

This is the type of attitude that I'm afraid of when I'm almost blindly offered a dance job. I think it takes a great deal of knowledge and confidence in my own dance ability to be able to separate out those types of offers from those people who see something special in my dancing. While its easy to say that a job is a job regardless of why you get it, there is an internal desire in me to be wanted for something more than just being a male. This is not to be overly selective in the jobs that I take, but a much more comforting feeling to know that I'm dancing because I deserve to dance, not because I am the only option.

Putting all gender aside, dance is about something much greater; something that goes beyond male and female. Dance is the expression of the human body in any form

and the universal gift of dance is made available to anybody who loves the art form enough to pursue it. Though the political and social aspects of dance often separate out into gender issues, there is a part of the art form that can never be brought into any such discussion. The part of dancing that brings true happiness will never be lost in such earthly arguments. Male or female, the act of dancing at its most glorious moments is transcendent. I am thankful for these moments as they allow me to forget about *what* I am and enable me to start discovering *who* I am.

Works Cited

- Anderson, Jack. *Ballet and Modern Dance: a concise history*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton Book Company, 1992. Second Edition
- Chodorow, N. "Gender, relation, and difference in psychoanalytic perspective," in H. Eisenstein and A. Jardine (eds), *The Future of Difference* Boston: G.K. Hall.
- Johnston, Gordon. *Dancing...A Man's Career*. New York and London: Cornwall Books, 1985.
- Ramsay, Burt. *The Male Dancer: bodies, spectacle, sexualities*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Senelick, Laurence. *Gender in Performance*. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1992.

My Dance Aesthetic

My Dance Aesthetic

My dance experience at LMU has definitely broadened my dance aesthetic. Entering as a freshman 3 years ago, I had only experienced formal ballet and jazz training and a few modern classes. I had never studied dance forms of other nations, dance history, dance science, composition, or movement analysis. In these three short years, the way I dance has completely evolved. While it is sometimes hard to see the change in my dance ability when I'm living day to day, looking back at videotapes of my first dance performances here at LMU is a reminder of my progress.

Placing my dance aesthetic historically, I feel that the dance aesthetic I am working toward is more contemporary than classical. I find myself getting a lot out of classical movement in terms of strength and technique, but it doesn't feed me completely. My aesthetic needs some sort of spice in order for me to be completely happy. Working with choreographers who either combine styles or are innovative with their own work is very pleasing to me. In general, I find myself bored when I am stuck doing work that is monotonous all the way through. I need something to keep my attention as a dancer and feel like the audience wants the same thing. I enjoy watching choreography that keeps my mind alert, regardless of the tempo of the work.

I think this part of my aesthetic comes from growing up in such impatient times. People don't have the same sort of attention span anymore that used to keep them sitting in the theatre for 3-4 hours and more. Not that I don't appreciate dance in that way, but I feel much more engaged watching something that requires me to figure the meaning out, but not so much that I can't just enjoy the dance. The composition of the dance has to be

innovative and something I've never seen before to keep me interested. In my own composition, I hope to continue striving for that originality and quirkiness that will keep audiences engaged. I now have so many tools to use in my choreographic work from my experience at LMU. It will be a challenge to put together all that I have learned once I graduate and find the motivation and determination to work towards that goal.

To choose a dance style that I most closely relate with is difficult. I feel like every dance form I experience has some significance in the type of dancer I have become. Beginning with ballet, classical dance seems to fit easily into my aesthetic. Always struggling to find organization and order in my life, ballet suits my emotional lifestyle. It is very economical and logical, which pleases the part of me that desires a sense of straightforwardness. Ballet also helps me create lines, which are most intriguing to me about dance. The use of lines to create a particular aesthetic in dance is very powerful. In my own work, I find myself constantly worried about the shape of the body as well as the shape of the entire dance itself as it moves through space. My interest in design most likely contributes to this part of my aesthetic. Classical ballet gives my own work structure and form and contributes to the sense of shape about my choreography.

My brief background in modern dance has freed up my body in so many ways. As a bound mover, it is often difficult to release and suspend my body in dance. Training myself out of moving in such a way has been difficult, but has also been one of areas that I recognize the most improvement in. When I look back to my freshman year, I am amazed how much more I am beginning to use suspension and release to act as the breath in my work. Finding that breath was another important struggle for me. In classical technique, there is much more of a tendency to hold your breath. Ballet movement is not

often designed around the use of breath because it doesn't require the same amount of release in the body. To fulfill a movement in modern dance, I have to breathe.

Modern dance has allowed my body to open itself up to another realm of technique as well. Until I started modern technique, I really had no sense of my body ever connecting to the floor. I was moving on top of myself, not fulfilling movement to its absolute end, and cutting it off before it was finished. I think modern dance teaches a much more natural connection to the body that isn't found in classical dance. While ballet technique is essential for developing much of a dancer's body and line, modern dance gives the body the understanding of how it moves naturally through space. I discovered for myself in this form of dance a sense of how I moved and not how I was *supposed* to be moving. While there is a definite technique involved, modern dance allows a bit more interpretation and understanding towards how the body wants to move. When I worked on choreography and I got stuck somewhere, I found myself asking my body what it wanted to do next, and not just inserting random movement to fill time.

More specific into my dance aesthetic comes the uses of spirals and turns. People often point out to me that when I'm just standing around in class, I like to twist and turn. This is an area of dance that is very comfortable for me. I enjoy discovering new ways of turning and taking classical or traditional turns and changing the angle to make them more interesting. While many people fear turns, I find them one of the most magical parts about movement. Studying the spiral form in Laban Movement Analysis was great for me. I learned that turns originate and are balanced in the core, which was something that never occurred to me. I had been used to thinking of maintaining the turn from the upper torso and chest (because I was used to holding my breath as well). After finding

the sense of core support, I was able to expand my own movement vocabulary and incorporate a wider variety of spiral movement into my choreography.

As time goes on, I make more and more discoveries about what kind of dancer I am. I keep realizing just how much I am influenced by so many different dance forms, and how great it has been to be exposed to them all. When I picked apart my most recent choreographic work, I realized how I had incorporated movement styles from almost all of the choreographers that I had worked with at LMU. It is this sense of having the ability to effectively use *all* that I have learned to create and maintain an aesthetic that is individual to me.

A Career Reflection

A Career Reflection

What am I most excited about after graduation?

The chance to explore the world of dance and find a place in the dance world that is just right for me. I'm also excited to continue to improve my dance technique by immersing myself among professional dancers.

What am I most afraid of?

Finding a dance job and getting started on my own, most likely away from Los Angeles.

Everything everyone has told me I should do after I graduate:

Join a dance company, become a graphic artist, and move home (my mom)

Everything I wish—but think cannot come true:

I don't think that anything is impossible at this point. I hate to set myself up for failure.

How to Prepare:

Begin researching companies and arrange to take class with them. Move to New York or Europe to pursue companies that I am interested in. Continue taking technique class and improving and expanding my dance training. Possible take alternate dance forms as well as other modern dance techniques.

What have I actually started or put in motion:

I have jobs with companies here in Los Angeles to gain experience. I have also researched companies on the East Coast and in Europe to see if I'm interested in them.

Personal and Professional contacts:

Judy Scalin
Scott Heinzerling
Dance Faculty from LMU
Choreographers from LMU concerts
Craig Williams (danced with American Ballet Theatre)
Phip/Chip Fuller (danced with Ballet West)
Raiford Rogers (LA Chamber Ballet)
Family in Europe

Do I have a financial cushion?

No.

What will be my financial obligations?

Food, Housing, Transportation, Cost of Living (bills, etc.), dance classes if I'm not working with any companies or if I want extra training, loans from LMU.

Do I have a car?

Yes.

Will I need a car?

Not if I move to the east coast or Europe.

What else will I need?

A place to stay, a positive attitude, determination, support from friends.

Where will I study dance?

At studios around wherever I move to.

Dance Support System:

Judy and Scott, Katie, Mom, other dance friends I meet along the way.

Alumni Contacts:

Christy Candler

Practical Job Options (3):

1. Graphic Design
2. Web Design
3. Teach Dance

Desired Job (3):

1. Professional Dancer
2. Professional Choreographer
3. Graphic Artist

Resume and Photograph

Jody McClean

EDUCATION

1996-1999 Loyola Marymount University Los Angeles, CA
Bachelor of Arts degree in Dance

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1997-1998 Pasadena Civic Ballet Pasadena, CA
• *Hansel and Gretel*
• *Swan Lake*

1997-1998 DanceCorps Pasadena, CA
• *The Nutcracker*

1999 Los Angeles Chamber Ballet Los Angeles, CA
• *Cocktails with Joey*

1999 Santa Clarita Ballet Santa Clarita, CA
• *Cinderella*

1999 Westside Ballet Los Angeles, CA
• *Serenade*

TRAINING

San Francisco Ballet School
Houston Ballet Academy
Loyola Marymount University

REFERENCES

Available Upon Request

